

and the NDAA is the logical place to have that vote on the Senate floor.

The Iraq war has been over for nearly a decade. An authorization passed in 2002 is no longer necessary in 2021. In no way will repealing this measure impact our ability to keep Americans safe nor impact our relationship with Iraq.

We will have other votes on amendments on the Defense bill as well. I look forward to working with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to move this important process forward.

So now I am going to move cloture on the NDAA.

I have some words to say about my dear colleague, Senator LEAHY, and some words to say on Build Back Better, but I will come at a later moment because I know my friend from Tennessee is waiting to do those things tonight.

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 144, H.R. 4350, the National Defense Authorization Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 144, H.R. 4350, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 144, H.R. 4350, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Jon Tester, Jeanne Shaheen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Angus S. King, Jr., Alex Padilla, Sherrod Brown, Mark Kelly, Tim Kaine, Jacky Rosen, Tina Smith, Ben Ray Lujan, John Hickenlooper, Christopher A. Coons, Raphael Warnock, Mazie Hirono.

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory

quorum call for the cloture motion filed today, November 15, be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor, and I thank the Senator from Tennessee for her courtesy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

#### CHINA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, as I have been saying, it has been so difficult to get people to realize what we are facing from the Chinese Communist Party. They are an adversary, and seeing the evidence of genocide in Xinjiang didn't seem to be enough to persuade people.

Then you have the reports that Beijing manipulated multiple international organizations when it comes to the origins of the COVID-19 virus. That wasn't enough.

Hearing the Chinese officials threaten our pharmaceutical and medical supply chains in the midst of a pandemic—that didn't seem to be enough.

Watching in horror as the Chinese Communist Party threatened the Hong Kong freedom fighters and as they have threatened our friends in Taiwan—that didn't seem to raise the attention for them that this is not our friend.

They are not a competitor. They are an adversary.

We have seen these effects of the Belt and Road Initiative on the global balance of power. They still haven't said: We have to deal with China.

Not even Beijing going out here and pushing their nuclear power has seemed to push some of our colleagues across the aisle, as they have not paid attention to what is happening with our nuclear deterrent capabilities and what China is doing.

So it leads a lot of Tennesseans that I talk to say: What is it going to take for Joe Biden and his administration to take these global threats seriously?

If you look at what is going on in China and that doesn't do it, are you looking at Iran? Are you looking at Russia and how they are posturing troops on the Ukrainian border?

What is finally going to get them to say: China is an adversary, the new "axis of evil"—with Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea. These are adversaries. They are intent on global dominance and taking us down.

You know, and I have to tell the Presiding Officer, I think that the answer to that question, if we look at these threats, it really frightens a lot of people.

When I talk to our veterans, as I did last week, many of them—it frightens them when they see the nonchalance in attitude of this administration as we talk about these issues that are threatening our Nation's security and freedom at home and abroad. When you talk about inflation, when you talk about crime in the streets, when you talk about what is happening in our schools, when you talk about what is happening globally, people see this as a

threat to their life here. They see it as a threat to our security abroad.

My hope is that what we will see is real governance and real leadership that will come from the Senate. And also we would like to see this come from the administration, that people would see decisions made in good faith, not decisions made in bad faith or trying to dismantle the institutions of this government.

I yield the floor.

### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 401, Graham Scott Steele, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

Charles E. Schumer, Jacky Rosen, Thomas R. Carper, Alex Padilla, Tim Kaine, Richard J. Durbin, Elizabeth Warren, Jeff Merkley, Christopher A. Coons, Catherine Cortez Masto, Richard Blumenthal, Sheldon Whitehouse, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Gary C. Peters, Martin Heinrich, Brian Schatz, Chris Van Hollen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Graham Scott Steele, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) would have voted "Nay."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 466 Leg.]

#### YEAS—55

Baldwin	Duckworth	Klobuchar
Bennet	Durbin	Leahy
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Lujan
Booker	Gillibrand	Manchin
Brown	Graham	Markey
Cardin	Hassan	Menendez
Carper	Heinrich	Merkley
Casey	Hickenlooper	Moran
Collins	Hirono	Murphy
Coons	Kaine	Murray
Cortez Masto	Kelly	Ossoff
Crapo	King	Padilla

Peters	Schumer	Warner
Reed	Scott (SC)	Warnock
Romney	Shaheen	Warren
Rosen	Sinema	Whitehouse
Rounds	Smith	Wyden
Sanders	Tester	
Schatz	Van Hollen	

## NAYS—38

Barrasso	Ernst	Murkowski
Blackburn	Fischer	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hoeven	Sasse
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Shelby
Cassidy	Kennedy	Thune
Cornyn	Lankford	Tillis
Cotton	Lee	Tuberville
Cramer	Lummis	Wicker
Cruz	Marshall	Young
Daines	McConnell	

## NOT VOTING—7

Cantwell	Rubio	Toomey
Hawley	Stabenow	
Inhofe	Sullivan	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 38.

The motion was agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Cloture having been invoked, the Senate will resume executive session to consider the Steele nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

## INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, for many years now, there is a joke that Presidents have what is called infrastructure week, where they talk about infrastructure and the need for us to move our country forward and fix our outdated system of roads and bridges, freight lines, our ports.

We are, as a country, behind others countries in terms of investing in infrastructure, yet infrastructure week comes and goes without any progress.

Well, today, we had a true infrastructure week because the President of the United States signed legislation that came out of this body—it was bipartisan—that helps to repair our infrastructure in ways that is historic in the sense that it is a broader infrastructure bill than we have passed around here in decades.

It is a big day for infrastructure and, therefore, a good day for my constituents in Ohio and people all around the country—people who are stuck in a traffic jam or maybe people who are worried about the bridge they are going over, whether it is safe or not, which is the case of a big bridge in my community; or whether it is people who don't have access to high-speed internet and, therefore, can't do their school work or can't start a business or be able to get their telehealth. If you are a veteran in Ohio and you want to access telehealth, it is tough to do it in about one-third of our State because you don't have high-speed internet.

So there are a lot of different things that are in this legislation that will

help the people who I represent. We have a lot of aging infrastructure in Ohio on the water side, so our water infrastructure includes a lot of lead pipes still, as an example, and, therefore, drinking water issues.

But we also have a lot of edicts that have come down from the Federal Government that say you have to stop the combined sewer overflow. Our municipalities can't pay for the changes. This will help them as well.

In Cleveland, OH, we have a two-decade-old—I think it is a 47-year-old transit system. The cars, frankly, are being taken off track because they have gotten to a point where they can't be used any more, and yet it is way too expensive. The funding for transit will be very helpful in Cleveland, OH.

In my own community, we have a bridge people have been talking about fixing for, literally, 25 years, because I have been involved in that discussion when I was in the House and now in the Senate. The problem is the bridge was constructed assuming a certain amount of traffic, and yet the amount of traffic has more than doubled. As a result, they have taken the shoulders off the bridge in order to create more room for another lane. As a result, when you have a flat tire or an accident, God forbid, on the bridge—which, unfortunately, happens too often—there is no place to go and, therefore, causes even more safety hazards. The bridge is a bottleneck every single day, not just in rush hour. I can go there in the afternoon—you know, 2, 3 in the afternoon and people are backed up on this bridge.

A lot of the people who are backed up, by the way, are people who are in business. Eighteen-wheelers are trying to get through because it is the confluence of I-71 and I-75, two major interstates. So it is a big economic issue with all that lost time in commuting every day across that bridge, and all the lost time in terms of the freight has a big economic impact—billions of dollars, they say. Three percent of America's commerce goes across that bridge every day, so it is a real problem.

We have never been able to figure out how to fix it because we can't accumulate enough money locally—the State, Federal—to be able to make the big change that has to occur, which is building another bridge, expanding and fixing up the current one. It has been frustrating.

This legislation signed today will finally provide the tools to do that. They have to apply like any other project around the country. It is a grant that is based on merit, but the grant is specifically focused on major bridges, like ours, where you have this economic impact that are so-called functionally obsolete, meaning they are carrying more traffic than they should be. Ours is carrying twice as much.

It should fit very well, but they are going to have to come up with a local match as well. I am confident that it

can be found—a local match, which is less than we did before when we had a tough time finding that local match and were not able to move forward.

People in my community, they are ready for this bridge to be fixed. I mean, the Brent Spence Bridge is something I have heard about, again, during my entire career.

I got a little bit of funding here and there to do the environmental impact statement or do the engineering, but to actually get in there and do it is going to be extremely expensive. You are not going to find 2, 3-plus billion dollars without this kind of a Federal commitment. That is in this legislation, as an example.

It is also helpful that this legislation deals with our ports because one of the issues right now we have with the supply chain crisis is things are just not moving through our ports as quickly as they should, in part because our ports have fallen behind.

I mentioned other countries who spend more infrastructure. Countries like China spend a lot on their ports. China spends more than we do, as do other countries, because they know if you spend money on infrastructure, you get a more efficient economy that leads to higher productivity, and that, in turn, leads to economic growth and more tax revenue coming in, frankly. These are all factors that should be considered in looking at an infrastructure bill.

It is not like normal spending that might be stimulative spending that goes out the door right away. This spending will happen over 2, 3, 5, 10, even 15 years for these major projects. And then these assets that you are investing in—let's say it is a port, let's say it is freight rail, or let's say it is the bridge in Cincinnati or the infrastructure that is a water infrastructure issue in northeast Ohio because of lead pipes—what is fixed will last for a long time, so it is an investment in a long-term asset.

Right now, our country is facing historically high levels of inflation—the highest inflation we have had in more than 30 years. It is a big problem. Everything has gone up.

Gas—I heard yesterday now gas has gone up 50 percent this year. Two weeks ago, it was 42 percent. But all I know is it has gone up about a buck a gallon. When I fill up my pickup truck, I am spending \$100 now. That is tough for people, particularly people who have to commute for their work.

For lower middle-income families in Ohio, this inflation is really devastating. You go to the grocery—I just had somebody show me a photograph recently that someone took with an iPhone of three rib eye steaks for \$100 at Costco. Everything is going up, and that is really devastating.

You wouldn't want this infrastructure bill to add to that inflationary pressure. The good news is, as economists look at this, they say that it goes into the economy in ways that